THE Way to be Content.

A SERMON Appointed for the Croſſe, but Preached in the Cathedrall Church of S^t. PAUL in *London*, on *Munday* in *Whitſun-weeke*, being the 26. day of *May*, *Anno Dom.* 1634.

BY

IOHN GORE,

Rector of Wenden-lofts in *ESSEX.*

Printed at *London* by *Tho. Cotes*, for *Thomas Alchorn*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop in *Pauls* Church-yard, at the Signe of the *Greene-Dragon*. 1634.

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To the right worſhipfull,

Mr. IOHN PENRUDDOCK

ESQVIRE,

One of his Majeſties Iuſtices of the Peace for the County of WILTES:

My truly honoured Friend.

Right Worſhipfull,

God hath bleſt you in many and ſundry wayes, with a wiſe and underſtanding heart, with a prudent and religious wife, with ſweete and hopefull children, with a plentiful and proſperous eſtate; Give me leave (as your Chaplaine to God)

to pray for one blessing more, as the Coro-nis *and upshot of all the rest, and that is, that God would blesse you also, as I doubt not but he doth, with a contented minde in all these. This is the subject of my Sermon, and shall be the supplication of my heart, so long as ever I shall live to be*

Your poore unworthy friend,

IOHN GORE.

THE WAY TO BE CONTENT.

PHILIP. 4. 11.

I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

THE last time I was in this place, I shewed you the way to Prosper: My errand is now to shew you the way to be Content if you prosper not. Which howsoever it may seeme at this time an impertinent and improper text; yet let me premonish you what a Father said of *Benjamins* sacke, *Sacco soluto reluxit argentum*, When the sacke was opened the silver appeared; the silver was in it before, but it was not seene, nor knowne, nor taken notice of, till the opening: So give mee but leave to open my sacke, to unfold and enlarge and apply my meditations, and then if there doe no silver appeare, if there bee nothing worthy your observation and use; be but you content to heare it, and I will be content to beare it: For tis indeed a text of Contentation, and you shall have (God willing) a Sermon of Contentment. I pray God of his mercy grant, that I may so divide it, and so dispense it, that it may profit, and please,

and give Content both to God and you. And so I come to my text. *I have learned, &c.*

In which words I will observe two generall parts, which may be reduced to two heads, and be thus exprest. 1. *Disciplina pacis*, the discipline of peace, and that is to learne to be Content. 2. *Pax Disciplina*, the peace of this Discipline, or the profit of this learning, and that is, It armes a man and enables him to comply with all estates whatsoever. *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.*

1. *Disciplina pacis*, the discipline of peace, so the Scripture termes it, *Esay* 53.5. *The discipline of our peace was upon him*, (*i*) Christ was disciplined and punisht for us, that wee might have our peace without punishment. So some translate that place, *Psal.* 2. *vlt.* whereas we reade, *osculamini filium, Kisse the Sonne*, (*i*) doe honour and homage to the Sonne of God; some render it, *Apprehendite disciplinam* (*i*) apprehend his Discipline, obey his ordinances, and submit your selves to his corrections, as he submitted himselfe to ours, and this in the end will worke for your peace. And to say the truth, A man can never attaine to a well-setled peace, nor grow up to a well-grounded contentation, till he have beene some way disciplined by the hand of heaven. *Heb.* 5.8. tis said of our Saviour, Though he were a Sonne (the onely begotten Sonne of God, full of grace and truth) yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered: not that he was disobedient before he suffered; but the meaning is, though he had the habite of obedience before, he never learned the practise of it till then. For this lesson of contentment is just like your lessons of Musicke, a man can never be said to have learned them till he be able to practise them, for you must know that Christians are of two sorts.

Some are *silvestres*, or *onagri*, like wilde unruly Asses (so the Scripture termes them) *Iob* 11.12. I meane, unhumbled, untamed, unconverted sinners, that never yet felt the Yoke of Christ, nor the hand of God, nor the heavinesse of a wounded conscience: these know no other Content, but what their sports, their Musicke and merry company affords them; which is just such a kinde of Content as they that have the itch doe take in clawing and scratching

ſcratching their bodies, which pleaſeth them infinitely for the preſent, but makes them the ſorer and the rawer, and the worſet afterwards: For ſo all ſinfull pleaſure ends in paine, and if there be not *Ingrata recordatio*, an unpleaſing, a diſcontenting remembrance of all ſuch pleaſing contenting vanities, the ſoule will rue for it in another place. Theſe may fitly bee compared to the Lillies (which our Saviour ſpeakes of in the Goſpel, ſaying that *Salomon* in all his glory came not neare them) now the Lilly as long as tis faire whole, & untoucht, it looks beautifully, and ſmells pleaſantly; but let it be never ſo little nipt or bruſed or cruſht in a mans hand, it lookes ugly, and ſmells worſe: ſuch are all your joviall Gallants, and laſcivious younglers, as long as they are healthfull and ſound and aile nothing, their onely care is to give themſelves content, by hunting and hawking, by dicing and carding, by drinking and drabbing, &c. *ſic o ſic juvat vivere*, to ſome mens thinking, no ſuch contenting life in the world as theirs: till theſe men fall into the hands of God (as ſooner or later they ſhall ſurely fall) and God doth begin to nip them and bruſe and cruſh them in his hands with ſickneſſe of bodie, or ſorrowes of ſoule; alas, all their Content is vaniſht and gone, and they become like *Naomi* in *Bethlem*, neither pleaſing to themſelves nor others. Theſe contentments are worme-eaten like *Ionas* Gourd, that will faile a man when hee ſtands moſt in need of them, and theſe kind of men are farre from that Content which my Text ſpeaketh of.

But there are another ſort of Chriſtians, and they are *ſubacti*, or *Ablactati*, mortifyed, ſubdued or weaned Chriſtians, ſuch as *David* was, *Pſal.* 131. 2. *I have behaued my ſelfe like a child that is weaned, yea my ſoule is as a weaned child.* A child that ſucks, his whole delight is to be nibling at the breſt, nothing quiets, nothing contents him but that; but let him once be throughly weaned, and then, though you ſhew him never ſo goodly a breſt, abounding with never ſo luſcious milke, and flatter him never ſo much, you ſhall not get him to take it, nor to touch it; for then his content lies in another kinde, tis ſomthing elſe muſt quiet him, and not that: So tis with a mortified and an unmortified Chriſtian, nothing contents the one but the breſt of the world; no-

thing leſſe than that contents the other: When the ſoule of a Chriſtian is once weaned and taken off from the follies and vanities of this life, that he begins to ſavour and ſet his mind upon the things that concerne a better life, he ſhall feele his diſpoſition alter within him, and ſhall finde a more ſenſible content in enjoying his God, than any worldling upon earth either doth or can finde in enjoying his goods: as *David* affirmes, *Pſal.* 4.8. *Dediſti letitiam, &c. Thou haſt put more gladneſſe in my heart, than in the time that their corne and wine and oyle increaſed:* The meaning is, he tooke more delight and more content in the Law and favour of God, in the worſhip and ſervice of God, in converſing and walking with God; more (I ſay) by farre, than the men of this world could take in their joyfulleſt times of all, when their corne and wine and oyle encreaſed. And this is the *medulla* the pith and marrow of that Chriſtian contentation, which is begun upon earth, and never ends in heaven. This is ſuch a happineſſe that none can attaine unto, but onely they that are *Cribrati Chriſtiani* (as *Tertullian* termes them) ſifted Chriſtians, they that have beene winnowed and fanned, and ſifted (as it were) by Gods afflictions, by the devils temptations, and by the worlds unkindneſſes; they that have beene toſſed and tumbled and beaten in the world, and have found by their owne experience, that there's no content to be had in any eſtate but onely from God, and that there is no eſtate but God may be had in, if a man will himſelfe; theſe are they that have learned (with S. *Paul*) *in whatſoever ſtate they are, therewith to be content.* And ſo I come more nearely to the firſt principall part of my Text, wherein are three remarkable points to be obſerved.

1. *Singularitas perſona*, the ſingularity and propriety of the perſon, noted in the word ἐγὼ, I, have learned. 2. *Specificatio temporis*, the ſpecification or intimation of the time when hee learned it, noted in the word μαθὼν; he doth not ſay, I will learne to be content, but I have learned, I have done it already. 3. *Specialitas Rei*, the ſpecialty or excellency of the thing it ſelfe which S. *Paul* had learned and attained, and that was to be αὐτάρκης ſelfe-ſufficient: and what that meaneth you ſhall heare by and by.

1. *Singula-*

1. *Singularitas personæ*, I have learned. Some may happily conceit that S. *Paul* speakes but this of his owne particular, that he for his part had learned to be Content, not that tis the common condition of every private Christian to be thus qualified, thus contented: *Answ.* Tis true, as S. *Paul* was an Apostle (and you know he was a great Apostle, *Apostolus per Antonomasiam* called by the name of *The Apostle* in all our quotations of him) I say, as he was an Apostle he had his ἴδια χαρίσματα, his peculiar gifts and graces proper to himselfe, not attaineable nor imitable by us: but that he speakes here, he speakes it as a Christian, as a Convert, as a contented man, and thats a grace thats common to every true beleever. The Scripture speakes of a *Common faith*, *Tit.* 1. 4. because tis common to all the faithfull; and so likewise of a *Common salvation*, *Iude* 3. because tis common to all that shall be saved; which yet every Christian must labour to make proper to himselfe: so may this be called a *Common contentment*, because tis such as every Common Christian must apply to himselfe, and is bound in conscience to learne and practise for his owne particular, for the comfort and discharge of his owne soule in the sight of God. It is worth your observation that of *David*, *Psal.* 40. 6. where he saith of himselfe, *In the volume of thy booke tis written of me, that I should do thy will; O my God I am content to do it*: now let a man reade over the whole volume of Gods booke, he shall not finde that tis written of *David*, that he by name should doe the will of God more then another man. Why then doth *David* affirme this of himselfe? Ile tell you what I thinke the reason may be: *David* found in the volume of Gods booke that it was thus written of men of his ranke and quality, of Kings, Prophets, &c. that they should have a speciall care to doe the will of God, and to be exemplary in their lives to others; and this doth *David* appropriate and apply to himselfe in particular as if it had beene thus written of him and none else but him. In like manner, when you reade in the volume of this booke that tis thus written of S. *Paul*, that hee had learned to be Content, you must know that tis your case as well as his, and that you for your parts have as good cause, and as great reason (as ever *David* had) to apply this writing to your

ſelves, and ſay for your owne particular, *Tis written of me, that I ſhould be content, O my God I am content to be ſo.* It was good counſell that *Eliphaz* gave to *Iob*, 5.27. *Heare this, and know it for thy good,* (ſo we tranſlate it) but in Hebrew tis (*dang-lecha*) *know it for thy ſelfe.* Tis not enough for a man to know this in generall, that ſuch a thing muſt be, that every man muſt be content with his eſtate, becauſe God will have it ſo; but a man muſt apply this knowledge to himſelfe in particular, and labour to worke himſelfe to ſuch an εὐθυμία ſuch an inward tranquillity and contentednesſe of minde, that nothing that God ſends may come amiſſe to him. As S. *Auſtin* ſaid of Almes, *Qui vult ordinatè eleemoſynas dare, debet à ſeipſo incipere*; He that will give Almes in a right and orderly manner muſt begin with himſelfe; How is that? *Mendicat à te anima tua, ſurit juſtitiam &c.* Thy owne ſoule lyes begging of thee, it hungers after righteouſneſſe, it thirſts after grace, its naked and wounded for want of ſpirituall cloathing and comfort; firſt begin with thy owne ſoule, cheriſh that, comfort that, ſave and ſuccour that, ſhew mercy firſt to thy ſelfe, then ſhalt thou the better know and underſtand how to ſhew mercy and pitty to the bodies and ſoules of others. In like manner, He that would go the right way to true Contentment, muſt begin with himſelfe, firſt ſtudy his owne peace, ſubdue his owne paſſions, quiet his owne minde, and content his owne ſoule; and when he hath done ſo, he may then happily make his owne plaſter ſerve anothers ſore, and comfort others with the ſame conſolation wherewith himſelfe hath formerly beene comforted and contented: but that can he never do, till he be able to ſay of himſelfe, what S. *Paul* doth in my text: However others be affected, *I* (for my part) *have learned to be content.* So much for the firſt particular, which is *ſingularitas perſonæ*, the propriety of the perſon, ἐγὼ, *I, have learned, &c.* the next is,

2. *Specificatio temporis*, He doth not ſay, I will learne, *but I have learned to be content.* This is one of thoſe *præcognita* (as we call them) that muſt be knowne and learned aforehand, againſt the time that God will give occaſion to make uſe of them. As the Prophet *Eſay* exhorts, *Eſay* 42. 23. *Harken to this, and heare it for the time to come*: though it may be for the

the time preſent all things are ſo well with you, that you have no need, no uſe of this doctrine, yet the time may come (God knowes how ſoone) that you may be glad and thanke God that ever you heard it; doe not therefore heare it for the preſent onely (as moſt men doe Sermons) but heare it for afterward, and lay it up for the time to come. For as *Tully* ſayd of Poetry that it was a profeſſion for all times, proſperity and adverſity; for all ages, youth and old age; for all places at home and abroad: ſo is this a leſſon for all times, all ages, and all places; and happy are they that have learned it aforehand, that they may not be to ſeeke when they ſhall ſtand moſt in need of it but have a ſalve in readineſſe for every ſore. Was not that a ſad and a lamentable diſtreſſe, that the people of *Iſrael* were driven to, 1 *Sam.* 13. 22. *That in the day of battell there was neither ſword nor ſpeare found in the hand of any of the people, ſave onely in the hand of Saul and Ionathan*: how did thoſe unarmed people (*inermes in armis*) tremble and quake to meete their enemies in the faces. Even ſuch is the caſe of an unprepared Chriſtian, when trouble comes upon him like an armed man, ſuddenly and unreſiſtably, what miſerable plunges muſt he needs be driven to, that hath not learned aforehand to be content with any fortunes, and to repoſe and rowle himſelfe upon his God in the worſt events. When the world is full of feares, and dangers, and calamities are ready to breake in upon a people, what a taking are they in that have not *learned to be content*; as *David* ſaith of thoſe in a ſtorme at ſea, *Pſal.* 107. 27. *They are even at their wits end, ready to run mad, and goe beſides themſelves with aſtoniſhment and anguiſh of ſpirit*: whereas they that have learned Saint *Pauls* leſſon in my text, can ſay to their ſoules as *David* did to his, *Pſal.* 116. *Returne unto thy reſt, O my ſoule*: they can readily turne themſelves to God, who is *Centrum quietativum* (as the ſchoolemen ſpeake) and there finde reſt unto their ſoules (like *Noah* in his Arke) when a world of others are overwhelmed with a flood of ſorrow. Beloved, we are not worthy to know for what we are reſerved, nor how God will pleaſe to deale with us; let our care be therefore (like Mariners at Sea) in a calme to provide for a ſtorme, in health provide

for

for ſickeneſſe, and in peace prepare for trouble: that if any unexpected trouble ſhould ariſe, we may be able (with Gods mercy) to overcome it, and to wade contentedly and quietly through it; labour aforehand to ballaſt our ſoules with grace that we may hold out ſteddily, unmoveably in this troubleſome world. You know, that which muſt keepe a ſhip ſtiffe and ſteddy on the Sea, muſt not be levers and ſhores without it, but weight and ballaſt within it: ſo that, that muſt keepe a mans mind and conſcience ſteddy and upright, that it doe not *vacillare* ſtagger and reele to and fro like a drunken man (as *David* ſpeakes) 'tis not wealth and meanes without a man, but grace and godlineſſe and contentment within him; A man ſhall never be quiet in his mind, never ſetled in his conſcience, but alwayes toſſed and turmoyled with doubts and cares and feares, till he hath learned this leſſon of the bleſſed Apoſtle, *In whatſoever ſtate he is, therewith to be content.*

3. *Specialitas rei*, the excellency of the thing it ſelfe, expreſt in the word αὐτάρκης ſelfe-ſufficient; If we take the word in a ſtrict and proper ſence, none can properly and rightly be ſaid to be αὐτάρκης, ſelfe-ſufficient but onely God. As our Saviour told the young man in the Goſpell, *Marke* 10. 18. when he called him *Good Maſter: why calleſt thou me good* (ſaith Chriſt) *ther's none good but God*: the meaning is, none that hath his goodneſſe *in ſe, & a ſe*, in himſelfe and from himſelfe, but onely God; all the goodneſſe that men have, comes downe from God as light doth from the Sunne, or water from the ſpring (though Chriſt were God too, and therefore good, but that was more than the young man knew): ſo there is none truely ſelfe-ſufficient but God onely that hath this ſufficiencie, this fulneſſe of content in, and from himſelfe without being beholding to any creature: man of himſelfe hath no ſufficiency, neither ſufficient meanes to maintaine him, nor ſufficient ſtrength to defend him, nor ſufficient grace to ſave him, but all our ſufficiencie is from God; τὶς κρὸς ταῦτα ἱκανός who is ſufficient for theſe things? is as true in other caſes, as in the caſe of the miniſtry: man of himſelfe without God is not ſufficient for any thing; as the Moone is but a darke body, if the Sunne doth

doe not looke upon it, ſo is man but a dead creature if God doe not worke in him, there is no light nor life in him. Yet ſuch is the goodneſſe of God εὐδοκία the good pleaſure of his will (as the Apoſtle calls it) that when a man can ſo farre deny himſelfe, ſo farre maſter and prevaile with himſelfe, as to ſuffice and content himſelfe with that *dimenſum*, that portion which God hath allotted & aſſigned him, be it more or leſſe, to eſteem it enough and ſufficient for him; ſuch a one doth God account a man like himſelfe, a man after his owne heart, a man that is αὐτάρκης ſelfe-ſufficient.

And here I may take up *Moſes* wiſh, and ſay, *I would to God that all the Lords people were thus affected, and thus minded: Are your mindes ſet upon righteouſneſſe, O ye ſonnes of men?* (ſaith *David* in the Pſalme.) No: we may anſwere, and experience ſheweth that mens mindes are ſet upon covetouſneſſe, they are ſet upon the world, they are ſet cleane croſſe and contrary to the rule and direction of Almighty God. For thus the caſe ſtands, where God would have men to bee covetous, there they are content; and contrarily where God would have men to be content, there they are extreamely covetous. In ſome things God would have men to be covetous. 1 *Cor.* 12. *ult. Covet earneſtly the beſt things*: the things of this life are the worſt things in Gods account, howſoever we eſteeme them; thoſe are the beſt things which belong and bring a man to a better life; and of theſe God would have us be as covetous as we can be for our lives. ζηλοῦτε is the word, be earneſtly, eagarly covetous; never thinke you have faith enough, never thinke you have grace enough, never thinke ye have wiſedome and patience and godlineſſe enough; but ſtill labour, ſtill hunger after more; Herein *exerce avaritiam tuam* (as Saint *Auſtine* ſpeaketh) if thou haſt any covetouſneſſe in thee, exerciſe it this way, ſet it aworke about thoſe things, for here a *ſufficit* is deadly, (as the ſame Father hath it.) See now our croſſeneſſe and perverſeneſſe to God, where we ſhould be covetous, here we are too well contented, if we have never ſo little grace, neuer ſo little faith, never ſo little religion, &c. we are ready to ſay with *Eſau*, we have enough to ſerve our owne

turnes, we neither covet nor deſire any more; like that monk in Saint *Bernard*, that ſet downe this for his reſolution, *nec peior fieri volo, nec melior cupio*, I will bee no worſe, neither doe I deſire to be better; and ſo they ſtand at a ſtay like dwarfes, and never ſeeke to encreaſe their talent. Iuſt of *Gallios* temper, *Act.* 18. 17 *Nihil eorum Gallioni cura*, *Gallio cared for none of thoſe things*; nor doe we care for any of theſe things; where wee ſhould be carefull we are careleſſe, and too well contented where wee ſhould be covetous. Thus we croſſe God on the one ſide, by being content where we ſhould be covetous.

See now how we croſſe him on the other ſide, by being covetous where we ſhould be contented. As firſt in the matter of ſinne: A man that hath beene φιλήδονος a lover of pleaſure, more than a lover of God, and hath followed the luſts, devices and deſires of his owne heart a long time together, God would have ſuch a one to leave while he is well, to repent himſelfe, and content himſelfe with what is done and paſt, and to ſinne no more, leaſt a worſe thing than he is aware of, fall upon him. ἀρκετὸς ὁ χρόνος &c. (ſaith the Apoſtle. 1 *Pet.* 4. 3. *Let the time paſt of life ſuffice us, to have walked in laſciviouſneſſe, luſts, exceſſe of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abomidable Idolatries:* marke the word, *let it ſuffice*, or let it content you to have ſpent ſo much of your life in this ungodly and unprofitable manner: as if he ſhould have ſayd: ye have done enough, you have had pleaſure and ſinne enough, leave while ye are well, be content now to breake off that courſe, and begin a new one. A man would thinke ſuch meeke, ſuch moving counſell muſt needs take good effect: yet tis ſtrange to ſee how unreaſonable, how unſatiable men are in this kind, they can ſet no bounds to their appetites, no ſtint nor meaſure to their ſinnes: they can never tell when they have ſinned enough, never tell when they have drunke enough, never tell when they have angred God enough; but as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Eph.* 4. 19. *They commit uncleanneſſe even with greedineſſe*, ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ (is the originall word) with covetouſneſſe: no griping worldling is more greedy and covetous of money, than a wicked man is greedy and covetous of ſinne, that he can never ſee when hee

hath

hath enough of it; but ſtill goes on to adde ſinne unto ſinne, drunkenneſſe to thirſt, & as a covetous man treaſures up wealth, ſo doth a wicked man treaſure up wrath for himſelfe againſt the day of wrath, *Rom.* 2. 5. *Craſtinum peccatum hodiè delinquunt* (as *Greg. Niſſen* ſaid of the richman in the Goſpell) *They ſinne to day for to morrow.*

They ſtudy and deviſe and plot their ſinne afore-hand, as if our Saviours ſaying were not ſo, *Mat. 6. ult. Sufficient for the day is the evill thereof.* Alaſſe beloved, the beſt day that a man ſpends, or that day that a man ſpends beſt, he commits evils and ſinnes enough to repent of that day (Ile warrant him:) he ſhall neede no more to trouble him; yea, and happy too if he can make even with God at night. He ſhall not neede to bee ſo covetous, ſo greedy of ſinne, he ſhall one day have enough of it, perhaps ere he be aware, he ſhall one day finde what it is for a man to ſinne *in ſuo æterno*, when he comes to rue for his ſinnes, *in Dei æterno.* He that would ſinne everlaſtingly, if hee might live everlaſtingly, tis juſt with God that he ſhould ſuffer everlaſtingly: Thus will God croſſe ſinfull men, as bad as ever they croſt him, and teach them to be covetous where they ſhould bee contented.

Thus likewiſe do men deale with God for the things of this life; God is all for contentednesſe, and we are all for covetouſneſſe. God ſaith, *If you have but food and rayment* (though yee have little or nothing elſe) *yet be content with it.* 1 *Tim.* 6. for why? tis more than we deſerve, more than we are worthy of, more than God owes us, if he allow us but that. Yea, if we have but our *daily bread* (as our Saviour termes it) if God ſhould ſo reſtraine us in our diet, and cut us ſhort in our proviſion, as to allow us no more but bare bread, we have reaſon to be content with it, for we have that we prayed for; if God afford us more, we are bound to be the more thankfull, conſidering (with *Iacob*) *that we are leſſe than the leaſt of al Gods mercies*; there is not the leaſt of Gods mercies but it is too great and too good for us. And yet tis ſtrange to ſee how few there be, that thinke ill of themſelves, and well of their eſtates; I meane, that are well contented with Gods allowance; but rather with the Prophets wife, 2

Reg. 4. 6. who desired one vessell more when all was full before. Nay some are so unreasonable and unsatiable, that as the Prophet saith, *they enlarge their desire as hell*: some mans minde is like hell it selfe, which though it swallow up a world of soules, yet tis never satisfied, but still gapeth for more: that's the reason such a one can never be contented, because though he may have a house full of money, he can never have a heart full of money, for why? He hath a hell in his heart, that never can be filled with meanes nor monies. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart* (saith *Peter* to *Ananias*, when he lyed to the holy Ghost to save his money, *Act.* 5. 3.) There's the hell in the heart, that mans heart which is filled with the Devill, filled with covetousnesse and ungodlinesse, must needs have a hellish heart; yea his heart is a hell it selfe, the very habitation and house of devills, and woe bee to that sinne that brings a hell into a mans heart in this world, and brings a mans heart and soule into hell in the would to come. Thus you see what comes of being covetous where God would have men to be contented. Learne therefore from henceforth to set bounds to thy appetite, to moderate your cares for the things of this life, and to frame your desires to Gods appointment, and that's the way *to be content*.

I have not yet done with this point, for as I searched more narrowly into the originall word, I found that αὐτὸ goes before ἀρκὲς, that selfe goes before sufficient: which put me in mind of another consideration, and that's this, namely: That a man must be himselfe ere he can be sufficient: I meane, a man can never attaine to any true, reall sufficiencie or contentment of mind, till first he be himselfe. Every man is not himselfe; not onely fooles and mad men and drunkards are not themselves (as we say) not their owne men; but every unconverted, unhumbled, unwakened sinner. As is sayd of the Prodigall sonne, *Luke* 15. 17. that when he was converted, *Then he came to himselfe*; which emplyes that before that time when he lived in ryot, and excesse, and in that wastfull way of wickednesse, when he was glad to feede upon those *filiquæ dæmoniorum* those huskes of Divels which the text speakes of: all that while he was not himselfe, he never began to come to himselfe, till he began to come to his father: so to

speake

ſpeake properly, a man never comes to himſelfe, till he come home to God by true repentance, he is never his owne man, till he be the Lords. 3 Things there be that make a man not himſelf, and conſequently make him unſufficient and uncapable of true contentment. 1 *Nabals* drunkeneſſe. 2. *Nabuchadnezzars* madneſſe. 3. Satans villenage. That's the reaſon that the Scripture compares unregenerate men to drunkards, and mad men, and ſlaves, who of all others are truely ſaid to be not themſelves. S. *Paul* ſaith, 2 *Tim.* 2.25. that a Miniſter that hath to doe with refractory ſinners, muſt waite if at any time God will give them repentance, ἵνα ἀνανήψωσι, that they may awake out of their drunken ſleepe and become ſober (ſo the word ſignifies:) imploying that as long as we muzz'e our ſelves in our ignorance, and goe on ſecurely in our ſinnes, not grieving for them, not ſtriving againſt them, not making conſcience to reforme them, all that while we are like drunken ſots voyd of underſtanding, wee are not our ſelves. As there is a wet-drunkenneſſe, too common in theſe dayes, God forgive the world that ſinne; ſo there is μέθη ξηρὰ, a kind of dry drunkenneſſe (as the Prophet ſaith in another ſenſe, *Eſay* 51.21. *Thou art drunke, but not with wine.*) Every ſinne that a man is bewitched unto, doth for the time ſo infatuate and beſot him, that he is not himſelfe, hath not power over himſelfe, to refraine or repent of it, till God awake a man out of this ſame drunken ſleepe, & give him wiſdome to ſee into his ſinnes, and grace to forſake them; Then, and not till then doth he come to himſelfe. Now as ſome are not themſelves through drunkenneſſe; ſo others are not themſelves through madneſſe. *The heart of man* (ſaith *Salomon Eccleſ.* 9. 3.) *is full of evill, and madneſſe is in his heart while he lives.* Now mad men are of 2 ſorts. 1. Some are *furentes* furious or raging mad: like thoſe Phariſees *Luke* 6. 11. that were filled with madneſſe at the ſight of the miracls which Chriſt wrought; or like thoſe that ſtoned *Stephen*, *Act.* 7.54. *They gnaſhed upon him with their teeth*, διέπριοντο (is the word) they grated and ground their teeth at him, as if they had been cutting with a ſaw (for ſo the word ſignifies) they were ſo mad and divelliſh, that they could have found in their hearts to have ſawed him and torne him with their teeth.

Such mad men as theſe, let them be never ſo little ſtirred, or provoked, or croſt either by God or man, how bitterly doe they curſe and ſweare, and rage and damne theſelves to the pit of hell, that it would make a mans heart ake, and his ſoule tremble to heare and ſee it, for feare leaſt God ſhould take them at their words. *Curſed be their anger for it is fierce, and their rage for it is cruell, Gen.49.7.* 2. Others are *Amentes* fooliſh mad, *I have ſayd of laughter thou art madneſſe,* (ſaith *Salomon:*) is it not a mad thing for a man to laugh when he ſhould weepe, to ſing and ſhoute when he ſhould ſob and ſigh, to make himſelfe merry with that which makes God and his Angels ſory? Though wee account this cheerefulneſſe, the holy Ghoſt accounts it madneſſe. *Lachrimarum cauſas tripudiantes peragunt, & ridentes mortis negotium exequuntur,* (ſaith a Father) They that make a ſport of ſinne, do but dance a Galliard about the brinke of hell; and if that be not the madneſſe of folly, judge ye. Too many ſuch mad men there are in the world of both theſe ſorts and kinds, I pray God of his mercy convert them, and bring them into a better minde, that they may ſee and bewaile their owne miſerable eſtate through ſinne before God, and ſo may come to themſelves, for yet they are not themſelves, and conſequently can never attaine to any true contentment. Adde hereunto, thoſe that are the ſervants and ſlaves, the drudges and vaſſals of ſinne and Sathan. You know a ſervant is *totus alterius,* is not his owne man, is not a man of himſelfe: Even ſo, and more than ſo, is hee that is a ſervant of ſinne. *My brethren* (ſaith S. *Iames*) *be not many maſters, Iam.3.1.* every man naturally hath πολλους δεσποτας many maſters in himſelfe; every temptation, every ſinne, every luſt, is a wicked mans maſter; pride comes and that maſters him, then comes anger and that maſters him; then comes covetouſneſſe, or worldlineſſe, or filthy uncleanneſſe, all theſe get the maſtery of him, and keepe him in ſubjection that he is not himſelfe. *O quàm multos dominos habet qui unum non habet,* Oh how many maſters and Lords hath that man, that hath not thee O God, for his Lord and maſter! the very devill himſelfe is his maſter, yea more than that, he is his God: therefore hee is called the god of this world, 2 *Cor.* 4.4. And why the god of this world?

world? me thinkes that ſhould be too high, tôo happy, too honourable a title for ſo baſe a fiend: doubtleſſe the reaſon is this; becauſe as God at the beginning did but ſpeake the Word and it was done, *Gen.* 1. ſo if the Divell doth but ſpeake the word (as it were) but give the leaſt hint of any ſinne, that hee would have committed and done, preſently they doe ζητεῖν εὐκαιρίαν ſeeke opportunity to bring it to paſſe: at ſuch a becke are wicked men to the mortall enemy of their ſoules.

Can any man ſay, or doth any man thinke that theſe men are themſelves, or that they can enjoy true contentment? Alas no; for their caſe is juſt as the *Iſraëlites* was in *Ægypt*, who when they had wrought hard in the brick-kilns all day, were well whipt and beaten for their labours at night: or as *Sampſon* among the *Philiſtims*, who after he had laboured and ground like a horſe in the mill all day, was put into the priſon houſe at night; And what content could either of theſe take in their worke or in their wages? Thus will Sathan ſerve them that ſerve him; after they have wrought hard in the workes of darkeneſſe the whole day of their lives, when the night of death comes (without great mercy on Gods part, and great repentance on their owne part) they ſhall be ſure to be caſt into the priſon of hell, and there whipt and tormented everlaſtingly for their paines; And if there be any content in ſuch worke, or in ſuch wages, judge ye. By this you perceive, there is more belongs to ſelf-ſufficiencie, than perhaps you are aware of; there may be ſelf-love, ſelf-will, or ſelf-pleaſing, or ſelf-conceit, where there is no true grace nor feare of God: but there be no ſelfe-ſufficiencie, no ſolid contentment, till a man be delivered from *Nabals* drunkenneſſe, from *Nebuchadnezzers* madneſſe, and from ſatans villenage, & ſo be truly converted, and come to himſelfe; for there muſt be a converſion, before there can be any contentation, never looke to be contented, till firſt thou bee converted, and come home to God, and to thy ſelfe; for αὐτὸς muſt be before ἀρκὴς ſelfe, before ſufficient.

Hence then I obſerve foure *corollaries* or ſingular circumſtances touching the nature and quality of this ſelfe-ſufficiencie; that it is,

1. *Res*

1. *Res ſeria*, a ſerious thing; as *Seneca* ſayd of true joy, (*mihi crede, res ſeveraeſt verum gaudium*) ſo may I ſay of true contentment, tis not a light and frothy, but a grave and weighty thing; he that would be truely contented, muſt ſit downe and conſider ſeriouſly with himſelfe, in what tearmes hee ſtands with God: for ſuch as a mans conſcience is to Godward, ſuch is his contentment to himſelfe-ward. *There is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my God, Eſay* 57, 21. a wicked man can haue no comfort nor content, Why? *For he is like the troubled ſea, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt* (ſaith the Prophet in the ſame place;) and why like the troubled ſea, and not like the troubled ayre, for the ſame wind troubles both? The reaſon is, becauſe when the ayre is troubled, if the wind doe but ceaſe, tis preſently calmed; ſo is the heart of a godly man, when his troubles are over, his heart is preſently at reſt; but a wicked mans heart is like the ſea, which when the winds are layed, and ther's no outward thing to trouble it, it ſtill workes and foames, and troubles it ſelfe with its owne motion; ſo though a wicked man have nothing outwardly to trouble him, yet his owne unquiet heart troubles it ſelfe, and will not ſuffer him to be at peace. Take this for a Maxime, that a wicked man can never be a contented man. Try thy ſelfe therefore whether thou be *filius pacis* a ſonne of peace, or *filius iræ* a child of wrath; looke well into thy ſelfe to ſee how the caſe ſtands betwixt thy ſoule and thy God: if upon inquiry thou findeſt that God and thee are friends, then goe thy way (as *Salomon* ſaith *Eccleſ.* 9. 7.) *Eate thy bread with joy, and drinke thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy workes*: if otherwiſe thou be one that liveſt at variance with God, then change thy note and ſay, *Droope O my ſoule, hang downe thy head and heart, be in bitterneſſe of ſpirit, Inhære pœnitentiæ uſque ad finem vitæ* (*Amb.*) *repent and mourne to the very death*, never ſuffer one chearefull thought in thy heart, one chearefull looke in thy face, one cheerefull word in thy mouth, till thou haſt reconciled thy ſelfe to God, and made thy peace with heaven; never ſeeke to give thy ſelfe content, till firſt thou haſt given thy God content, for all the ſinnes wherewith thou haſt

haſt grieved and diſcontented him. Let no man therefore bee miſtaken in the matter of contentment, to thinke that tis a wanton and laſcivious thing; he that truely learnes it ſhall finde that tis *Res ſeria*, a weighty and a ſerious thing.

2. It is *Res ſacra*, a holy thing, therefore the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 6. joynes *Godlineſſe and contentment together*; to ſhew that none can be a contented man, but he that is a godly man. *A ſtranger* (ſaith *Salomon*) *doth not intermeddle with this joy*, *Prov.* 14.10. *he that is a ſtranger to God, and a ſtranger to godlineſſe, hath nothing to doe with true contentedneſſe.* In which reſpect the Apoſtle ſaith, *that God giveth to the godly* πάντα εἰς ἀπόλαυσιν, *all things richly to enjoy*, 1 *Tim.* 6.17. Tis one thing to uſe a thing, another to enjoy it; a wicked man may uſe the creatures, and the ordinances and bleſſings of God, but he cannot be ſayd to enjoy them; for that imports a ſweete and ſanctified uſe of them, which is the gift of God onely to them that are godly: and tis certaine, no man in the world takes ſo much content in his meates and drinkes, and lawfull recreations, as a godly man doth, for he enjoyes God in all theſe. Contrarily, *The joy of the wicked* (ſaith *Salomon* elſewhere) *hath a ſnare in it*; (*i*) a ſecret guiltineſſe of ſinne that ſtrangles all their mirth, ſo that even in laughter their hearts are heavie. It followes then, that as that was the beſt wine that was of Chriſts making, *Iohn* 2. when he turned the water into wine; ſo that's the beſt content that is of Gods making, when he turnes our carnall joy into a ſpirituall joy, and mingleth heavenly content with earthly. Let no man therefore have a miſopinion of contentment, as if it were a ſenſuall or carnall thing, for he that truely underſtands it, ſhall finde that tis *Res ſacra*, a ſacred and holy thing.

3. It is *Res pretioſa*, a pretious thing, not onely as tis ſayd. 1 *Sam.* 3. 1. That the word of God was precious in thoſe dayes, that is, rare, unuſuall, and ſeldome heard of: for ſo is contentment too, tis a rare thing to finde a contented man; but tis *Rarum* and *Charum* too, not onely pretious for the rarity and ſtrangeneſſe of it, but for the worth and excellence of it; as the blood of Chriſt is called pretious blood, for the worth and excellencie of it, above al other blood; for one drop of it was able to re-

deem a world in this sence is true content a precious thing; tis indeed the only ἐγκόσμιον the only heaven upon earth that this world affords, without which a man is even dead while he liveth, and many times through griefe and discontent, is even ready (as *Iob* speakes) *to chuse strangling and death, rather than life, Iob. 7. 15.* Let a mans house be never so well situated, never so well furnisht, and fairely built, if he have no content in it, it is but (as the City of Refuge was said to be) ἀδέσμιος φυλακή, a prison without fetters, though it be not a place of durance, tis a place of bondage to him. Let a mans wife be never so vertuous, if he have no content in her, she is but ὄφις ἐν κόλπῳ, like a snake in his bosome, a continuall heart-sore and vexation to him; though a man have many children and meanes enough to leave them, if he have no content in them, they will be to him (as *Iacob* sayd of *Simeon* and *Leui*) a meanes to bring downe his hoary head with griefe and sorrow to the grave. Let a mans table bee never so richly decket, (as *David* speakes) if he have no content in it; it is but with him, as it was with the *Israelites*, when God gave them Quailes to eate, but sent leannesse withall into their soules. All your Cupboards of plate without contentment, are but (as *Moab* was said to be *Olla lotionis*) no better than washpots, or as the Prophet expresseth it, *They are vessells wherein there is no pleasure*. In a word, there is no earthly blessing within doore or without, that is of any price, or worth, or value, to a man, except it have contentment joyned with it. Therefore judge ye, whether it be not *Res pretiosa*, a rare and precious thing. *If thou separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth* (saith *God Ier. 15. 19.*) there is a vile, a base contentment that consists in sensuality and beastly lusts, when men like Swine lye and wallow in the myre of their owne sinnes: but ther's another contentment, when a man like *Enoch* can walke with his God; and enjoy the comfort of a good conscience to himselfe; and this is that which I terme pretious.

4. Lastly, tis *Res petenda*, a thing to be prayed for. *For this shall every one that is godly, make his prayer unto thee*, (saith *David Psal. 32. 6.*) for other things the prayers of the godly differ, and very exceeding much, one prayes for faith, another for patience, another.

another for wisedome, &c. according as every one knowes the state of his owne soule, & the necessities of his owne life. but this is such a πανχρηστον, such a universall good thing, that every one that is godly will be sure to pray for, though they differ in other things; in this they all agree, all their prayers jumpe & meete in this center; there is not a godly man upon earth, but he doth heartily desire of God, that if God will not give him meanes to live richly, nor health to live soundly, yet that he would give him grace to live contentedly. *Super hoc*, for this shall every one that is godly make his prayers unto thee. It is indeed a grace that comes immediately from God, as the Apostle imployeth in the next verse to my text; having sayd here; *He had learned to be content*; hee useth another expression there, and saith μεμυημαι, I am Divinely taught, *or I am taught of God to be content*: tis not mans teaching then, but Gods teaching, his inward effectuall working that must learne a man the Art of contentation. *Non lectio, sed unctio* (as S. *Bernard* speakes) tis not all the reading in the world that can bring a man to it, but tis that same Annoynting (which the Scripture speakes of, 1 *Iohn* 2.27.) that must supple and soften a mans heart, and make him pliable to any condition. A man must be θεοδιδακτος, inwardly taught and wrought of God, before he can come to the true understanding and application of it to himselfe. Its true, that all other blessings besides this, doe come from God, but not so immediatly as this grace doth: if a man want money, friends may supply him; if he want counsell, the Lawyers may helpe him; if hee stand in need of physicke, there be those that can doe him ease; but if hee want a heart to live comfortably, and grace to live contentedly, it is God alone that can furnish him therewith. He is the God of *all Grace* (as S. *Peter* cals him, 1 *Pet.* 5.) he hath the treasury, the monopoly of it in his owne hands: Want you wisedome? want you faith? want you contentment? &c. to him you must repaire: It is *Hee that giveth his beloved sleepe* (as *David* speaketh.) He that would sleepe quietly, and awake contentedly, must be a suter to God; Contentment will not come alone, tis *Res petenda*, a thing to bee prayed for, and happy are we, that we may have it for praying.

And here I cannot but commend unto you the prayer of *Agur*

for this very thing, *Prov.* 30. 8. that holy man knew that if the world afforded any perfect contentment, it was in a middle estate, equally distant from penury and from excesse: he knew it was a hard matter for a man that is either very poore or very rich, to live contentedly: therefore he desired of God to give him neither poverty nor riches, but to feed him with food convenient for him. That God would grant him such an indifferent, such a midling estate, that he might neither be so poore as to be dispised, nor so rich as to be envyed, but onely so happy as to be contented: this was the summe and substance of his prayer. Give me leave I beseech you, to make a little digression upon it, I hope it shall be no transgression, neither to your patience, nor to my purpose, because tis so agreeable and sutable to my text. There you may see the two extreames of this vertue; poverty on the one side, and riches on the other, (like the two theeves in the Gospell) and contentment (like our Saviour Christ) in the midst betweene them both.

The first extreame, or enemie to contentment, is Poverty, though it please God to lay poverty upon some men (I suppose) for their soules good; that by being poore in purse they may learne to be poore in spirit, that so being wretched one way, they may come to be blessed another way: *for blessed are the poore in spirit, Mat.* 5. Yet you would not thinke how hard a thing it is for a man that lives very poorely, to live very contentedly. But I will give you my reasons for it, and they are foure.

1. *Propter inediam*, for the famine and hunger that poore people endure in these times of dearth & scarcity, which rich ones neither feele nor feare. As it was with *Ioseph*, *Gen.* 37. 25. His brethren sate down to eate and drink, & be merry, while poore *Ioseph* lay pining and starving in the pit: and to that the Prophet *Amos* alludes, blaming those that lived at ease in *Syon*, and were not sorry for the afflictions of *Ioseph*: *super contritura am Ioseph* (some render it for the threshing and flayling of *Ioseph*. How many poore *Iosephes* are there in this kingdome, that are faine to thresh & flaile, to worke and toyle from morne to night, and all they can doe, all they can earne, will hardly buy bread

bread for their poore wives and children. In all the Lamentations of *Ieremy* there's nothing more lamentable than this, *Lam.* 4.4. *Parvuli panem petunt, &c.* The little children cryed and dyed for bread, and there was not one that could breake it to them. Blessed be the Lord, it is not so in this City, your plenty, your bounty, your mercy hath provided better for poore children than so; and I doubt not, but the promise, the grace, the glory of God will reward and crowne you for it; but let me tell you (beloved) in the Country abroad, where no such provisions are, you would blesse your selves to heare and see and know, how hardly the poore do fare, how wretchedly, how miserably they live; having no more, but as they say of prisoners pittances, οὐδὲ τρέφει, οὐδὲ ἐᾶ ποθνήσκειν, it will neither keepe them alive, nor suffer them to dye; so much as by the mercy of God will hold life and soule together, and that is all. And if it be an easie matter for such to be contented, judge ye: When a mans wife shall cry, his children cry, his cattell (if he be worth any) shall cry and lowe and bleate for want of food, and a man hath it not to give them; Oh my brethren, this cuts, this wounds, this peirceth to the very heart and soule. No marvaile then that *Agur* prayed to God, Hee might not come to poverty, *Propter inediam*, for the hunger that the poore do suffer.

2. *Propter iniuriam*, for the injuries and wrongs that poore people suffer from rich oppressors, & are not able to right themselves. The Prophet *David* saith, *Psal.* 10.9. *They ravish the poore when they get him into their nets.* What are the *Nets of rich men?* but their bonds, their debts, their motgages; as S. *Chrysostom* saith, γράμματα προσάγετε σιδήρου ἰσχυρότερα. You bring us into writings that are stronger than any iron chaines. These be the nets of rich oppressors, their writings and obligations: Now when they get a poore man into these nets, how doe they use them? *David* saith, they do not onely rob them, but Ravish them: You know Ravishing is a dishonesty joyned with violence and cruelty: so the meaning is, when they get a poore man into their debts and dangers, that he is hampered and entangled in their nets, they use him dishonestly, and they use him cruelly too; there's neither equity nor mercy to be had at their

 hands.

hands. Elsewhere *David* termes them ἀνθρωποφάγους, men-eaters, Christians in name, but Canibals indeed. *Psal.* 14. 4. *They eate up my people, as they eate bread*: they do not onely nip them and bite them by their usury (as you know usury in English, is biting in Hebrew, so the word *meshech* signifieth) I say, they doe not onely bite them by their usury, but they devoure and eate them up by their extortion: *They eate up my people as bread*, (*i.*) they make no more conscience to undoe a poore man, than they make conscience to eate a meales meate when they are hungry. Beleeve it, these men are no better than murtherers in Gods account; for a poore mans substance is termed his life in Scripture: In the Gospell tis said, *Mark.* 12. *ult.* that the poore widdow cast into the treasury ὅλον τὸν βίον, *Her whole life*, (*i.*) her whole substance. So *Luke* 8. 43. tis said of the woman that had an issue of blood 12. yeeres, that she spent ὅλον τὸν βίον, *Her whole life*, meaning her whole living, upon the Physitians: They then that take away a poore mans substance, do in effect, and in Gods account take away his very life, and so are murtherers. For a poore man in his house is like a snaile in his shell, crush, that and you kill him. In another place tis said, *They grind the faces of the poore*: that is, they use them as cruelly and unmercifully, as if they should take a poore mans face and grind it on a grindstone. Now if this be not an enemy to a poore mans content, judge ye: therefore *Propter iniuriam*, for the wrongs that poore people suffer, and cannot right themselves; *Lord* (saith *Agur*) *let me not come to poverty.*

3. *Propter infamiam*, for the reproach, the scorne and contempt that is incident to men of poore estate; let a poore man be never so honest, never so modest, never so vertuous, yet the world regards neither his vertues nor him, but doth ὑπερόπτευειν looke over him, or disdainefully upon him, as the *Pharisee* did upon the *Publican*, *Luke* 18. when in contempt he called him *Iste publicanus*, this Publican, this base inferiour fellow, who was a better man to God-ward than himselfe. Saint *Iames* knew the guise of the world and observed it, *chap.* 2. 2. that if there come one into your houses ἐν ἐσθῆτι λαμπρᾷ with a gold ring, and gorgeous apparell, such a one is accepted and entertained

rayned with all reſpect; but let there come in a poore man ἐν ῥυπαρᾷ ἐσθῆτι in vile rayment, or in a poore habit, he is deſpiſed and bid ſtand behind the doore. Looke into *Luk.* 15. 30. you ſhal ſee a true image of the rich churles of theſe times: when the poore prodigalls wings were clipt, his means were waſted that he was glad to ſeeke reliefe in his fathers houſe, though his good father kindly embraced and entertained him: (as God doth all repenting ſinners) yet his elder brother would not owne him, but called him in diſdaine, This thy ſonne: not this my brother, but this thy ſonne, as if he had beene nothing of kinne to him, becauſe he was growne into poverty, and driven by neceſſity to make bold with his friends: had he come home richly attyred or bravely attended, or ſufficiently monyed; then (no doubt) he ſhould have beene his brother, as welcome to him as to his father; but becauſe hee was beggerly, bare and poore, he was but οὗτος ὁ υἱός σου *this thy ſonne. O nimis inimica amicitia,* (ſaith a father) Oh the too friendleſſe friendſhip of this world, that want of meanes ſhould cauſe want of love, that a man ſhould be valued, not according to that which hee hath, but according to that which he hath not. I beſeech you take it into your conſideration, whether it be not a hard matter for a man to be well contented, that ſhall ſee himſelfe deſpiſed and undervalued: and then judge whether a man hath not reaſon to pray as *Agur* did, Lord let me not come to poverty, *propter infamiam*, for the contempt and ſcorne that poore men are ſubject to.

4 Laſtly, *propter imbecillitatem*, for the frailty and weakeneſſe of our corrupted nature, which is ſuch that if our meanes begin to faile us, our faith in God is ready to faint and faile us too. Though God would have us live by faith, *Heb.* 10. 38. yet alas we count that but a poore kind of living; and as long as we can either live by our meanes, or live by our friends, or live by our wits, or live by our ſhifts, as long as we can live any way, we will hardly be brought to live that way, to live by our faith in Ieſus Chriſt. It fares with us for the moſt part as it did with *Hagar*, *Gen.* 21. 15. as long as her bread and her bottle held out, ſo long ſhe was reaſonably well content; we

heare

heare no complaint, no moane that she made; but as soone as ever these were wasted and spent and done, presently she falls a crying out, she was undone, she and her child must dye, there was no more hope. Thus it fares with us: as long as our meanes and monies hold, we can be indifferently well content, God Almighty seldome heares of us, but if these be exhausted and gone, weare presently out of heart, wee thinke ther's no way but one with us: we and our children must perish, ther's no other hope: unlesse God open our eyes, as he did the eyes of *Hagar*, to see the fountaine of his goodnesse that's ever at hand to supply the poores necessities; and then we are quieted. Beloved, tis an easie matter for a man to pray for his dayly bread, when he hath it in his cupboard; but when our owne provisions fayle us, then to rely and rest upon the provisions of God, that's the tryall of a Christians faith. Tis an easie matter to swim in a warme bath, every weakling, every impotent body can doe that; but he that can hold up his head in a dangerous sea, when every wave is ready to absorpe and swallow him up, that's the tryall of a mans strength and life: so tis an easie matter to be content in a plentifull estate, where there's no want, no lack of any thing; but for a man to be cast as it were into a Sea of troubles, where so many wants like so many waves, come dayly beating and breaking in upon him; then to hold up his head with content and confidence in God, ther's the touchstone of an undissembled faith indeed. You that never yet felt any want, little doe you know what plunges poore men are driven to in the time of need; therefore since God in mercy doth not make you to know their miseries by experience, I would have you to know it by fellow-feeling; that you may learne of *Agur* to desire of God not to bring you to poverty, *propter imbecillitatem*, for the weakenes of humane nature, that can hardly hold out in the want of earthly meanes.

Thus you have heard the inconveniencies of poverty, which is one extreame of this vertue; heare now in few words the inconveniencie of Riches, which is the other extreame; both enemies to a mans contentment. (*Give me neither poverty nor riches.*)

By

By *Riches*, doubtlesse *Agur* meanes such *Riches* as our Saviour cals μαμωνα ἀδικιας *the mammon of unrighteousnesse*, Luk. 16.9. Riches ill-gotten, by unjust, unrighteous meanes: for otherwise *Salomon* tels us, *Prov.* 10.22, *That the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it*: intimating, that they which grow rich, and not by Gods blessing, but by such meanes as God hath accursed; the Lord doth adde such a deale of sorrow and care and vexation with it, that they were as good or better be without it. Such riches they were that *Abraham* rejected at the King of *Sodomes* hand, *Gen.* 14.23. when he offered him goods and spoyles enough to have enriched him and all his household; no (saith *Abraham*) *I will not take so much as a thred or a shooe-latchet, because it shal never be said, the King of Sodome hath make me rich*: men shall never say, that *Abraham* was made rich not by Gods blessing, but by the King of *Sodomes* meanes: God shall make *Abraham* rich, or I am content still to be poore. It is reported of *Neveſſan* (a better Lawyer, than honest man) that he should say; *He that would not venture his body shall never be valiant, nor he that will not venture his soule, be rich.* Let them that make no reckoning of their soules, venture them at their perill; but let all that desire contentment here, or heaven hereafter, make their prayers ro God as *Agur* did, *From such kinde of Riches, good Lord deliver us.* And great reasons may be given for it.

1. *Quia onerant*, because such kind of riches load and clog the soule. *Hab.* 2.6. *Woe be to him that increaseth that which is not his, and to him that ladeth himselfe with thicke clay: How long?* Marke what a base terme God gives the wealth of this world, he cals it *densum lutum, thick clay*; because it bemyres and clogs us too: He that increaseth that which is not his, but hookes it out of other men by evill meanes, he must needes be bemyred, must needes have a foule conscience, an uncleane heart to Godward: and he that ladeth himselfe with *thick clay*, must needes be clogd in his minde, must needes go heavily and slowly on to heaven, if ever he come there with such a lading: And marke how the Prophet addes, *Usque quo? How long?* and there makes a stop: to shew the indefatigablenesse of covetous men, though they have

enough to load them, they can never have enough to tyre them; though he load his house, his bags, his wits, his memory, and his conscience, yet is he never weary with all this lading, but still desires to take in more. As a ship may be overladen with gold and silver even unto sinking, and yet have compasse and sides enough to hold ten times more; so a covetous man, though he hath enough to sinke him, he never hath enough to satisfie him. As a dog may have his stomacke cram'd, *usque ad vomitum*, till he cast it up againe, and yet his appetite is still unsatisfied, for he presently returnes to his vomite againe: so a covetous miser, though hee cramme his chests with gold, his garners with corne, his deskes with bills and bonds, yet his lust is never satisfied, his minde is never wearied; which makes the Lord even to wonder at it, and aske, *usquequo? How long?* There's no end of a covetous mans desires; he never leaves clogging and lading himselfe, till he and his load perish together. Take heede therefore of ill gotten riches, *Quia onerant*, because they load the soule, and hinder it in its passage to heaven, and in that sence are an enemy to mans contentment.

2. *Quia corrumpunt*, because ill-gotten riches corrupt a mans conscience, and make him worse than otherwise he would or could be. 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. *They that will be rich fall into many temptations, snares and lusts which drowne men in perdition and destruction.* Marke, that he doth not say, they that are rich, (for a man may be *divinitus dives*, divinely rich, or rich to God; I meane rich and godly too; as *Moses* is said to be *divinitus venustus*, divinely faire, or faire to God, *Act.* 7. 20. so the originall hath it.) Neither is it said, *They that would be Rich*, if God so pleased to blesse them by just and honest wayes. But they (saith the Apostle) *that will be Rich*, that set downe this for their resolution, Rich they will be, by right or by wrong; they are those that corrupt themselves, and runne the hazzard of their soules. It is the conceit of *Tertullian*, that even *Judas* carried himselfe honestly and rightly *usque ad loculorum officium*, till he came to carry the Bagge, that same γλωσσοκομον, (as the Evangelists word is) *the purse or tongue*, as it signifieth; For *Judas* thought, as all covetous men do, that the purse is the best tongue a man can use to

speake

ſpeake for himſelfe upon any occaſion; when onee he came to that, to be a maſter of money; he grew into ſuch a devilliſh humour of covetouſneſſe, that rather than he would be out of takings, he would ſell his very Saviour: and a faire match he made, (for as *Auſtin* ſaith) *Iudas ſold his ſalvation, and the Scribes and Phariſees bought their damnation*, and all for a little money. No marvell the Apoſtle cals *the love of money, the roote of all evill*: tis not ἀργυρος, the matter of money, but φιλαργυρία, the love of money, that is the Roote of all evill. And why the Roote? I thinke, for two cauſes. 1. Becauſe a roote is of a ſpreading, of a growing nature, ſpecially if planted in a fruitfull ſoyle. Such is the corrupt heart of man, if Satan can but once faſten that wicked roote of covetouſneſſe in a mans heart, and water it as he will with ſuggeſtions, tis wonderfull how it will ſpread and grow and encreaſe continually more and more. Or ſecondly, ſome ſay it is called the Roote, becauſe it is with a man as with a tree in winter, there's ſap and life in the roote, when there's little or none to be ſeene in the branches. So in old and frofty age, when other vices and luſts decay, then covetouſneſſe holds life in the roote, and a man will be covetous when he hath not ſtrength to be other wayes vicious. But why is it called *the Roote of all evill*, for tis not the roote of prodigality, ryot, &c. I take it, the meaning is, of all gainefull evils; if ſo be that ryot and prodigality were as gainefull evils as baſeneſſe and miſery, a covetous man would be as inclineable to the one as to the other. Labour then to pull up this ſame ῥίζαν πικρίας, *this Roote of bitterneſſe*, and deſire God to plant the ſweete and comfortable grace of true contentednеſſe in your hearts, that you may be ſo farre from being carried away with the love of money, that you may account it (as the Apoſtle ſpeakes) but σκυβάλα, but droſſe, but dung, but offall, but filth and garbage, in reſpect of Chriſt, and a good conſcience.

3. *Quia cruciant*, becauſe they vexe and greeve, and paine the ſoule. Our Saviour Chriſt compares them to thornes, & thornes you know are painefull things; painefull in the piercing, but more painefull in the pulling out: ſo are ill-gotten riches, painefull in the getting, but moſt painefull in the going out; when

these thornes come to be pluckt out by the hand of death, that a man and his riches must part, then is the paine, then is the woe: for now mens hearts are hardned, their consciences seared, they have (as the Apostle saith) πέρωσιν καρδίας, a kinde of horny-hoose growne over their soules, like the brawny hardnesse that growes upon a labourers hands, or a travailers feete, that makes them insensible of any paine: Oh but when death comes to pare off this crustinesse, and leaves nothing to stand betwixt a mans soule and his sinnes, then is the anguish of ill-gotten goods; when he is searched to the quicke, and his life lies a bleeding, then let him say, whether ungodly riches be not paineful things. *Zophar* gives them a worse Epithet than thornes, and likens them to poysons, *Iob* 20.12. Sugred poysons goe downe pleasantly, Oh but when they are downe, they gall, and gnaw, and gripe the very heart-strings asunder, if there be not extraordinary remedy: So do ill-gotten goods go downe like sugred poysons, and so please the palats of covetous men that they cannot forbeare them, nor will they: Oh but there will come a time of wringing, and ruing for all this. They say, the *Italians* will give a man a poyson that shall not kill him till a long time after: such poysons are ill-gotten riches; would you know the reason why they doe not trouble mens consciences now? tis because the poyson doth not yet work, when God in judgement sets this Poyson a working, which they themselves have taken long agoe, then (as the Prophet *Esay* saith Chap. 3.9.) *Woe be unto their soules, for they have rewarded evill to themselves.* If a man should have a Diamond curiously cut into sharpe angles in his body, or in his bladder, no man would account him a rich man, but a miserable and a dead man: even such is the state of him that hath swallowed downe the guilt of ill-gotten gaine, it will one day torment him more than ever it enriched him; so that the pleasure of the one, shall never countervaile the paine of the other. Take heede therefore and beware of ill-gotten riches, *Quia cruciant*, though they smart not now, they will one day rend the soule.

4 *Quia pereunt*, because ill-gotten riches never prosper with a man, but perish and come to a naughty end, and that partly through the owners wickednesse, as the Prophet speakes

ſpeakes of ſome that earne wages and put it in *pertuſum ſacculum* into a broken bag, or into a bag full of holes and chinkes; every luſt, every ſinne that a wicked man is given to, makes (as it were) a chinke or a hole in his eſtate, whereat his wealth runnes out, if it be not ſtopt by true repentance: and partly through the juſt judgement of God, that like as we ſee, *Mark.* 11. 20. as ſoone as Chriſt had curſed the figtree, it preſently withered and dryed up ἐκ ῥιζῶν from the rootes, to ſhew that it was not the roote alone, but the bleſſing of Chriſt that did ſupport the figtree: tis not all a mans care, nor all his endeavour that can keepe his wealth from withering and periſhing, if God from heaven give a curſe unto it, as he doth to all ill gotten goods. *Woe be to him that coveteth an evill covetouſneſſe to his houſe, Hab.* 2. 9. there hangs a judgment over that mans houſe, like raine in the clouds, which ſooner or later will come daſhing downe upon it and overwhelme it. *Fire ſhall conſume the Tabernacles of bribery, Iob* 15. 34. a man that builds his tabernacle, and raiſeth his eſtate by bribery, and ſuch unlawfull meanes, the Lord doth beare ſuch hatred to that mans houſe, that if Atonement be not made, he will even fire it and burne it to the ground: what a world of ſudden and lamentable fires are there every day in ſome or other place, who can tell but that God doth fire ſuch houſes for the bribery and iniquity of the owners and founders: you know that fire may be given to a traine of Gunpowder, a great way off from the place to which the blow is intended, ſo may judgement be breeding a long time ere it breake out, it may hover a long time ere it light: therefore as you tender your owne ſafety, take heede of getting riches by ill courſes, *quia pereunt* becauſe they periſh and come to a naughty end. And wilt thou periſh (ſaith *Auſtine*) for that which periſheth? God forbid.

5. Laſtly, *quia damnant*, becauſe without Gods infinite mercie they damne a mans ſoule eternally. The Apoſtle *Paul* is direct, *Rom.* 3. 8. *They which doe evill that good may come of it, their damnation is juſt.* Now wherefore doe men filch and ſteale, cozen and deceive, defraud and over reach, and doe all

manner of evill? is it not that good may come of it, that they get goods by it? if it be so, then make the inference your selves, whether such mens damnation bee not just. But I dare not dwell upon this uncomfortable point, I know tis beside my text; let me entreat you in a word, and so I have done with it: that seeing riches ill gotten are so dangerous to the soule, and so great an enemy to a mans contentment; that you would remember *Agurs* prayer, and desire no more of God but that which is food and meanes convenient for you; and that is onely so much as you may get justly, use soberly, enjoy thankfully, distribute cheerefully, and leave contentedly.

You have heard the two extreames of this vertue (Poverty and Riches) now the meane is that where true contentment rests, that is, when God fits a man with such an estate as is most meete, and most convenient for him (*feed me with food convenient for me*, saith *Agur*.) when a mans heart & his estate doe *convenire*, doe meete, and agree and comply in one, ther's the contentment that my text speakes of: when God fashioneth a mans heart to his meanes, as *David* speakes, *Psal.* 33. 13. 14. 15. *The Lord looketh downe from his habitation, upon the men of the earth, and he fashioneth their hearts every one of them*; as a sute of cloathes is fitted to a mans body, so doth God fashion a good mans heart to his estate, and makes it sutable, fit and convenient for him, and this is it that gives him content: for when there is an unsutableness, a disproportion, a disagreement, betwixt a mans minde and his meanes, he can have no content, no comfort in it; as we see by *Ahab*, and by *Haman*, and divers others, who wanted for no meanes, yet because their hearts did not *Convenire* did not comply and agree with their estates, see how discontentedly they lived and dyed. If then thy estate be not according to thy mind, desire of God (as *Agur* did) to fashion and fit thy mind and heart to thy estate, that they may *convenire*, concord and comply one with the other; then shalt thou have content in it, be it more or lesse. You must know, it were as easie to God, to give a man plenty as poverty, health as sickness, peace as trouble, all were one to him to give a man great meanes as little, but onely

that

that he ſees the one more convenient for ſome men than the other, and accordingly diſpenſeth his favours. He is καρδιογνώστης the knower and ſearcher of the heart, and ſees, that ſome man if he had more, it would make him proud, if he had leſſe it would make him repine; he ſees that every man hath not wiſedome, nor humility, nor heavenly mindedneſſe enough to concoct a more plentifull eſtate, and therefore he fits every one with ſuch an eſtate as is moſt ſutable, moſt convenient for him. Doe not therefore thinke hardly of God becauſe he ſtraytens thee and cuts thee ſhort in many things which thou deſireſt, but know that God knowes thee better than thy ſelfe; Remember what title S. *Paul* gives to God. 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *To God onely wiſe be glory and immortality*: If we did but conſider that God is μονῷ σοφῷ θεῷ *onely wiſe*, it would be a great ſtay to our minds, and a great helpe to our contentment: But here's the miſchiefe, we thinke our ſelves wiſe too, nay I may ſay it, we thinke our ſelves as wiſe or wiſer than God; we are of *Alphonſus* his mind, who feared not to ſay, *Si in principio mundi ipſe Deo adfuiſſet, multa melius ornatiuſque condenda fuiſſe*, if hee had beene with God in the beginning, things ſhould have beene contrived in another manner than now they are: ſo doe we blaſphemouſly thinke, that if God would but take our counſell and be ruled by us, things ſhould be carryed in another manner than now they are, that ſome ſhould not have ſo much, others ſo little, ſome all, others never a whit: thus wee wretchedly and blaſphemouſly thinke our ſelves as wiſe, or wiſer than God, and thats the reaſon we are not content with his dealing; whereas if we did conſider that God were onely wiſe, and none were wiſe but he, this would make us reſigne our ſelves to him, ſubmit our wills to his, and ſay as *Ely* did, *It is the Lord, let him doe whatſoever ſeemeth good unto him*: for whatſoever ſeemeth good to him, cannot but be good, howſoever it ſeemes to us. Doe but thus thinke, thus believe, thus conceive of God, *and that's the way to be content.*

I have done with the firſt generall part of my Text, which was *diſciplina pacis*, the diſcipline of peace, and therein you may learne what a happineſſe it is to be Content, or (as the word

word signifieth) to be selfe-sufficient. I come now to the second, and that is *pax disciplinæ* the peace of this discipline, or the profit of this learning; and therein you shall see, how I for my part, you for your parts, and every one for his owne part, may doe to attaine unto this happinesse, and learne for our owne particulars to be contented with our owne estates. My Text you see, is generall and comprehensive, and doth extend and enlarge it selfe, not to any one estate or condition of life, but to all conditions, and to all estates whatsoever: For if contentment consisted or rested onely in nobility and greatnesse, what should become of the meaner multitude, how should they be Content? if it consisted in ease and pleasure, how should they be content that worke and labour; if in costly apparell and dainty fare, what a case were they in that goe poorely and fare hardly; In a word, if contentment were limited and confined to any one condition, if it were included & shut up in any one estate, what should become of all the rest? But the comfort is, that God in mercy hath so divided, and dispersed and diffused this grace into all estats of men, that in whatsoever state a man is in, through Gods blessing and his owne endeavour, he may be contented with; the poore man as content as the rich man, the husbandman as the Gentleman, and the subject as content as the King. *I have learned* (saith S. *Paul*, like a *tetragonismus* or a Dye that falls square which way soever it lights) *In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.*

Thus farre in generall; I come now to particulars. As God charged his Prophet, *Ezek.* 14. 4. to answer them according to their Idols; go no further then their owne case, and speake home to that; so give me leave to lay before you certaine particular cases of discontent, which are or may be your owne cases in particular, and when I have answered you according to them, when I have satisfied and shewed you how they may be borne with a contented minde, ἐχωὼθω I have done. The cases are sixe.

1. *Moses* case, to be crost in ones wife, as he was by *Zipporah*. 2. *Elies* case, to be crost in ones children, as he was by *Hophni* and *Phinehas*. 3. *Iosephs* case, to be crost in ones reputation,

putation, as he was by his miſtreſſe. 4. *Mephiboſheths* caſe, to be croſt in ones friends and meanes, as he was by *Ziba*. 5. The Cripples caſe, *Joh.* 5. to be croſt in ones preferment and hopes, as he was, for he lay at the poole of *Bethſda* 38. yeares, yet ſtill one or other croſt him, and ſtept in before him. 6. *Hezechias* caſe, to be croſt in ones departure out of this world, to be called to dye (as he was) at ſuch a time when a man deſires moſt to live. Theſe ſixe, in my opinion, are the principall caſes, and the chiefeſt cauſes that are (as *Ariſtotle* ſpeakes) πάσης νόσου the makers and breeders, the provokers and procurers of greefe, diſpleaſure, and diſcontent. I will but ſtrike theſe ſeverall flints with a touch and away, and I hope in God that each of them will afford you a ſparke to inlighten my Text; and to ſhew you *the way to be Content.*

As *Iacob* when he bleſt the ſonnes of *Ioſeph*, *Gen.* 48. bleſt them with a croſſe, croſſing his armes (as you may ſee by the Text:) ſo the greateſt bleſſing that ever came into the world, came by a croſſe (the croſſe and paſſion of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour;) and there is no man living ſo bleſt of God in this world, but he hath ſome croſſe or other to keepe him humble and the moſt uſuall are theſe.

1. *Moſes* caſe, to be croſt with a *Zipporah*, with an ill-tongued wife: or *Abigailes* caſe, to be croſt with a *Naball*, with an ill-conditioned husband; we will put them both together, becauſe this croſſe is like an *Amphiſbana*, a Serpent with two heads, which bites both wayes, and ſtings at both ends; and there muſt be a redreſſe on both ſides, or there can be no contentment on eyther: As the Poets feigne of *Venus*, that ſhe brought forth a ſonne, and called his name ἔρως, *Love*; this ſonne of hers would never thrive nor come to any growth, till ſhee had brought forth another ſonne, and ſhe called his name Ἀντέρως, as you would ſay *love for love*. Thus ſtands the caſe betwixt a man and his wife, they are like ἔρως and Ἀντέρως, the love of the one will never grow nor thrive without the love of the other. If there be not a reciprocall affection, a mutuall endeavouring to give each other content, their life will proove rather *Conjurgium* than *Conjugium* (as one ſaid) rather a warfare, then a

welfare, and they shall live in the family as *Iacob* & *Esau* did in the womb, and doe nothing but wrastle and struggle for superiority; which is a hatefull life both to God and man. Well, but if it be thus, that a man or woman be thus croſt, what is to be done in ſuch a caſe? I anſwer, ther's no way but one, and that's it my Text ſpeakes of, onely to learne *to be Content.* But yet ther's a courſe to bee taken for that, and tis this. *David* tells us in the *Pſalme*, that tis God that maketh them that are in one houſe to bee of one heart: if therefore any diſcontent ariſe in a family, the onely way is to have recourſe to heaven by humble and earneſt prayer, and God will worke a peace twixt man and wife. We ſee in *Geneſis*, as long as *Adam* and *Eve* lived at one with God, they lived at one among themſelves; but ſo ſoone as they were divided from God by ſin, thay became divided among themſelves by diſcord; *Adam* falls a blaming of *Eve* and accuſing her to God, in whom before hee rejoyced as bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh: So marke it where you will, ſeldome do man and wife fall out among themſelves, but firſt they are fallen out with God, and ſeldome agree except God hath a hand in it. The Hebrewes obſerve that Gods name (*Iehovah*) and mans and womans name (*Iſh* and *Iſhah*) begin both with one and the ſame letter; now if you take out the firſt letter of Gods name from a mans and womans name, nothing remaines but *Eſh* which ſignifieth fire. This is the true reaſon why there is ſo much fire, I meane ſo much unkinde and unnaturall flames of contention betwixt man and wife, onely becauſe God is left out, the Lord is not betweene them. Therefore the onely way to bring peace and unity into a family, is to bring God into the family; and the onely way to bring God into a houſe, is to bring him and draw him in by prayer. Draw neare to God, and God will draw neare to you (ſaith S. *Iames.*) Bee not you wanting to God, and God will never bee wanting to you; Alwayes remember the Apoſtles farewell to the *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. *Be of one minde, live in peace, and the God of peace ſhall be with you.* Thus doe as God would have you, *and that's the way to be Content.*

2. *Elies*

2. *Elies caſe, to be croſt in ones children*, Put caſe thy children be either taken from thee by untimely death, in their youth; or which is worſe, live to be ungratious and undutifull to thee in their age: theſe are piercing griefes; yet learne to bee content in both. For the firſt, ſay that Almighty God, who hath *Ius vitæ & necis*, the power of life and death in his owne hands, and can draw out and cut ſhort our lives as it pleaſeth him, doe cut off thy child in the budding, in the blooming of his age, when he is, *Auroræ filius* (as the Poets ſpeakes) a ſonne of the morning, ſo that all thy joy, thy hope, thy comfort, ſeemes to periſh and dye, and be extinguiſht in him: yet learne to bee content, for why? Conſider, that if thy child had lived, he muſt have ſerved an apprentiſhip all the while, that he might after have beene free of the heavenly *Ieruſalem*: now if God in his mercy will grant it the freedome in the beginning of its yeeres and make him a Citizen among the Saints ſhortly after he came into the world, is this any cauſe of diſcontent? and not rather of thankeſgiving? But who can tell whether ſuch a child be ſaved or no, if I were but ſure of that (will ſome ſay) I ſhould be the better content: though I know a good parent will abhorre ſuch a thought of doubtfulneſſe, yet for the better ſettling of your mindes in that aſſurance, do but call to minde our Saviours ſaying, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for unto ſuch belongeth the kingdome of God*: tis not onely ſaid that they belong to Gods kingdome, but that Gods kingdome belongs to them, (as much as to ſay) if any have a right unto it, or may claime a part or portion in it, tis ſuch or none: in the originall it is, τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τ θεῦ, *For of ſuch is the kingdome of God*, (that is) Gods kingdome doth conſiſt of little children, heaven is repleniſhed and ſtored with ſuch as they. Foraſmuch then as there can bee no feare nor danger of thy childs ſalvation with God, let this teach thee to be content, if God ſhall take him from thee in the beginning of its dayes.

But the greateſt croſſe of all is, when children live to be ungratious and undutifull to their parents in their age (as *Elyes* were) when aged parents ſhall be forced to complaine, as the tree did in the Apologue, that it was rent and torne and ſplit aſunder,

asunder, with the same wedge that was cut out of its owne bowels; this I am perswaded is the greatest greefe that can befall a tender-hearted parent. This was the crosse that subdued *Egypt*; all the plagues of God, could not make them yeeld, till God smote their children, and that broke their hearts: so 1. *Sam.* 30. 6. tis sayd of *Davids* men, *that their soules were bitter for their children*; the miscarriage of a child is gall and wormewood to a parent, it imbitters their very soules. If thy case be thus, I bewaile and condole it: onely let mee perswade thee to be content, because the God that made thy childe, can mend him. Doe therfore for him as *Noah* did for *Iaphet*, *Gen.* 9. 27. He had given that son of his a great deale of good counsell, no doubt, and perswaded him to dwell in Gods Church, and become a lively member of the same; but knowing well to how little purpose all this would be, without Gods working upon his heart, he falls to prayer, *God perswade Iaphet to dwell in the tents of Shem*: as if he had sayd, I have advised and done my utmost, to perswade thee my sonne; but all this is but lost labour, unlesse God put to his helping hand; now therefore, *The good Lord perswade thee, &c.* Thus doe thou for thy refractary child, desire God to perswade him, to convince him, to convert and turne his heart, and thou shalt see that nothing shall stand in his way, but the worke shall be accomplished. If God undertake to bring *Peter* out of prison, no bolts nor barres shall be able to hold him there; if the Lord take in hand to leade *Israel* out of *Egypt* into the promised land, sea shall be no sea, wildernesse no wildernesse, Giants no Giants, &c. So though thy childe be never so ill minded, never so desperately bent, if God undertake to mend him and make him good, all his ill conditions shall not hinder it: therefore let not thy heart sinke, nor thy faith faile, nor thy hopes languish, but still pray, still entreat, still waite upon God, and thats the way *to be content*.

3. *Iosephs* case, to be croft in ones reputation. Put case thy good name (which *Salomon* saith, is more precious than riches) be impeached and taken from thee by slanders, and lyes and base imputations of those that wish thee ill: for such is the vice

vice and villanie of the world, that they will traduce and diſcredit a man, whether he deſerve it yea or no. *David* compares ſuch to the Aſpe, which is a beaſt ill ſighted, but quicke of hearing, weake but full of poyſon; ſo are all detractours, ill-ſighted to ſee any thing that's good in another, but quicke of hearing any thing that is bad of him; weake they are in judgement and in charity both, but full of the poyſon of malice and envie. *The poyſon of Aſpes is under their lips, Pſal.* 140. 3. *Junius* tranſlates it, *venenum ptyados*, the poyſon of the ſpitting ſerpent; they have learned of the old Serpent, the Divell, to ſpit their venome in the faces of thoſe that faine would live in peace, and dwell ſecurely by them: they are indeed a curſed generation, *Deut.* 27. 24. *Curſed be he that ſmites his neighbour inſecret* (that doth ſecretly and ſlyly underhand traduce him, and ſeeke to worke him out of the good opinion of his neighbours and friends) and marke what followes, *let all the people ſay, Amen.* God doth not onely curſe ſuch a one himſelfe, but hee gives all his people leave to curſe him too: and curſed be that offence that brings the curſe of God, and the curſe of the people upon ſuch an offender.

Well, if it have beene any of your hard haps to be thus ſecretly ſmitten, or openly injured in your reputations, (as ſome of us, I am ſure have beene) let me (as I have begun) entreate you to beare it contentedly whether you deſerve it or deſerve it not.

If thou doeſt deſerve it, and that by thy ſcandalous life, thou haſt throwne this dirt in thy owne face; then be content and be ſorry for what thou haſt done, and God ſhall repay and make up thy good name againe: wee have his owne promiſe for it, by his owne Prophet, *Zeph.* 3. 11. *In that day thou ſhalt not be aſhamed for all thy doings, wherein thou haſt tranſgreſſed againſt me*: the meaning is, that in the day of thy repentance, God will take from thee, not thy ſin onely, but thy ſhame too. *David* by his great ſinnes, had in a manner quite broken his good name, inſomuch that his enemies began to inſult and make ſongs upon him to diſgrace him utterly; yet becauſe he was a penitent man, God upon his repentance repayred his

good name, and he dyed (saith the text) *full of riches and Honour*: first *Chronicles, chap. ult*: not of riches onely, but of honour too: all his dishonour was done away, and he left a reverend and renowned name behind him: when hee had gotten credit with God, hee got credit with men too. In a word, if thou desirest that others should speake well of thee, see thou have a care to do well unto thy selfe, *Psal.* 49. 18. *Si benefeceris tibi, If thou dost well unto thy selfe, men will speake good of thee.* So that it lyes in a mans selfe, tis in his owne hand to make himself a good name or a bad one: So long as a man doth well to himself, (*i.*) spends his time well, serves his God well, leades his life well, and husbands his estate well; so long hee shall be sure to be well thought of, and well spoken of: but if he do *ill to himselfe*, take an ill course, leade an ill life, and follow ill company, &c. if he be then ill-spoken of, he must thanke himselfe: and he may say to himselfe, as the Heart of *Apollodorus* the tyrant seemed to say to him, who dreamed one night that he was fleade by the *Scythians*, and that his heart cried unto him out of the Caldron, ἐγώ σοι τούτων αἰτία, tis I that have brought thee to all this. Therefore if thou deservest to be ill-spoken of, *amend thou thy selfe, and God will amend thy name.*

But if thou be ill spoken of, and deservest it not, though the crosse be great, the comfort is the greater; for doe but rest contented, and God will finde a time to bring thy innocency to light. Looke how God doth with secret sinnes to bring them to light that are done in darkenesse; so will hee doe by secret innocency: *Iosephs* uprightnesse was in secret, none saw it or knew it but onely God and himselfe; as for his mistresse shee accused him, belyed and slandered him, and was beleeved; poore *Ioseph* eyther pleaded not for himselfe, or his plea was not heard nor credited, yet God found a time to cleare it and bring it to light: so let the world raise what slanders they will, looke how he did with *Ioseph* so will he deale with thee, for hee is a God that changeth not. In the meane time, doe not take too much to heart the reproches of thy enemies, but pray as *Austin* did, *plue mihi mitigationes in cor, ut patienter tales feram*, Oh my God, showre downe thy gentle appeasings into my heart

heart, that I may patiently beare with ſuch men as theſe; Pray (I ſay) to God, that hee would pacifie thy owne heart, and mollifie thy enemies hearts, *and thats the way to be Content.*

4. *Mephibosheths* caſe, to be croſt by perfidious friends and ſervants. I confeſſe tis a hard caſe when ſuch as are *Viri pacis*, and *Viri panis* (as the Prophet ſpeakes,) that eate of a mans bread, and profeſſe friendſhip and love and ſervice to a man; when they ſhall go about to undermine him and worke him out of favour, and out of his fortunes too: yet the world is full of ſuch *Zibaes* that care not how they collogne, nor whom they ſlander for their owne private advantage: If they ſee a man to be a cripple (as it were) that he cannot go to ſpeake for himſelfe, nor come in place to anſwer for himſelfe, and to tell his owne tale, he ſhall be ſure to have his tale told for him, by ſome that he little dreamt of, that will doe him a diſpleaſure, and he ſhall never know who hurt him. Thus did *Ziba* deale with *Mephibosheth*, 2 *Sam.* 19.30. yet ſee how patiently, how contentedly, that good man put it up; when *David* ſpake of dividing the land with *Ziba*, *Let him take all* (ſaid *Mephibosheth*) *ſeeing my Lord the King is come home in peace.* Here's the voyce of one that is a true ſervant to his God, and a true ſubject to his King; ſuch a man is really content, that the devils pioners (I meane) undermining flatterers, ſhould take all they can get, and get all they can take, eyther by *Hophnies Fleſhhooke*, 1 *Sam.* 2. or by thoſe Nets and Dragges that the Prophet ſpeakes of, *Hab.* 1.15. let them hooke, hale and drag together the Divell and all (as ſome I thinke will doe:) A contented man had rather with *Mephibosheth* looſe all, part with all, and be ſtript of all hee hath, ſo he may but have leave to enjoy the favour of his God, the ſafety of his Soveraigne, and the peace of his owne conſcience to himſelfe. Well, if it be thy hard hap to be thus abuſed and undermined by a trecherous *Ziba*, that beares thee faire in hand, and ſecretly endeavours to worke thee out of all; yet learne of *Mephibosheth* to be content, though thou goeſt by the worſe; and deſire of God as *David* did to ſtand thy friend in ſuch a caſe; *ſponde pro ſervo tuo, in bonum, Anſwer for thy ſervant in the thing that is good*, *Pſal.* 119.122. as if he had ſaid; Lord thou beareſt and ſeeſt how

how unjustly I am calumniated and evill spoken of in many places, where I am not, nor may not come to answer for my selfe, therefore Lord doe thou answer for me, or stirre up some good body to pleade my cause, and speake in my behalfe. *Subarrha servum tuum* (so some translate it) be surety for thy servant; if they will not beleeve mee nor give credit to my words when I speake in my owne defence; be thou O Lord a surety for me, passe thy word for my truth and sincerity, for thou knoweſt my cause is good. *Be surety for thy servant in the thing that is good*: Thus doe, see thy cause be good, thy conscience cleare, thy heart unguilty of the great offence, and then commend thy case to God, let God alone to answer for thee, *And thats the way to be Content.*

5. The Cripples case, *Ioh.* 5. to be croſt in ones preferment, as he was that lay 38. yeares at the poole of *Bethesda*, wayting for a good houre, and still one or other stept in before him, and intercepted him of his cure, & put him by from all his possibilities and hopes. And this is the great *Cordolium* the very heart-ake and greevance of many a worthy man, many a worthy Scholler, that hath lyen a long time at the poole of the Church and Court, hoping at length to climbe up that same βάθμον καλὸν (as the Apostle cals it; 1 *Tim.* 3. 13.) that good step or stay to honour and preferment, that others have done, and still one or other steps in before him, intercepts him of his hopes, and casts him downe as low as ever his expectations raiſed him up. If this be any of your cases, I shall give you no other counsell then I desire of God to take my selfe, and thats this; to learne of that Cripple to be content for a time, to tarry Gods leasure, to attend still at the poole (I meane at the ordinances of God) and you shall see at length, that if Angells cannot helpe you, Christ himselfe will come and doe a cure upon you, and rather worke a miracle than your faith should be disappointed, or your hope should make you ashamed. In the meane time you must know, that there is a speciall dispensation of God in his dealings with some of his servants, *Num.* 12. 7. *My servant Moses is not so* (saith God) *he is faithfull in all my house, unto him will I speake mouth to mouth.* Heere was a speciall favour that God would shew to *Moses*, which hee would

would not ſhew to every one that was faithfull in his houſe. You ſee *Matth.*17. when Chriſt was transfigured upon the mount, hee tooke but three of his Diſciples with him, and left the reſt behind, who yet were as neare and deare, and as good Diſciples as they. Afterwards, *Matth.*27. when Chriſt aroſe from death, tis ſaid, that *many of the Saints aroſe to attend him*; Many Saints, not all; others that had beene as holy and as ſanctified men as they, ſtayed ſtill in their graves, and their bodies lay in the duſt expecting glory. Thus doth God ſtill deale with his ſervants; ſome he raiſeth up to wealth and honour and preferment; otherſome hee depreſſeth and holdeth downe with poverty, want and neede, who yet no doubt are as true and faithfull ſervants to God as they that are advanced. *Salomon* tells us, *Eccles.*9.11. The race is not to the ſwift, nor the battell to the ſtrong, nor riches to men of underſtanding, nor favour to men of knowledge: his meaning is, that men of greateſt abilities, men of greateſt ſufficiencies are oft times kept low, when others that are but *Gregarij ordinis* to our thinking, are advanced and lifted up. This is to learne us to be content with our eſtates, becauſe they are of Gods aſſignement and deſignation. Content (I ſay) not onely by conſtraint, but willingly (as the Apoſtle ſpeakes in another caſe;) for you know there is a twofold contentment: *voluntary*, and *involuntary*. The *Involuntary* is when a man is content with his eſtate againſt his will, becauſe he cannot helpe it. As *Simeon* of *Cyrene*, *Matth.*27.32. ſubmitted himſelfe to beare the croſſe of Chriſt, becauſe hee was *Angariatus* compelled and forced to it (as the Text ſheweth:) this is a thankeleſſe and fruitleſſe contentment, *virtus nolentium nulla eſt*: God takes no pleaſure in forced patience; patience perforce hath ſmall thankes with God. But it is the *voluntary Contentment* which proceeds *ab intrinſeco* from an inward working of grace, from that ſame *free ſpirit* that *David* ſpeakes of, *Pſal.*51. when a man doth voluntarily, freely, and of his owne accord endeavour to worke himſelfe to an αὐταρκεία to an inward ſelfe-ſufficiency, whether his eſtate pleaſe him or no, as they did *Ier.*42.6. *Whether it be good, or whether it be evill, we will obey the voyce of the Lord, &c.* Not onely when Gods will and ours ſute together, but when there is an utter diſagreement betwixt them: then to be content without

conſtraint, is thankeworthy with God. You ſee by experience, A man that comes to an Inne, if hee can get a better lodging and better attendance, he will; if he cannot, yet he will be content with it; for why? Hee conſiders tis but for a night and he is gone: thus wee come into the world as it were into an Inne, which is a place of paſſage, no place of abode; if we can get a better eſtate or a better condition, uſe it in Gods name; if not, yet *learne to be content*, for why? tis but for a night, for a ſhort ſpace, and you are gone. And ſo I come to the laſt caſe of all, and that is,

6, *Hezechiahs* caſe, to be croſt in ones departure, to be called to dye at ſuch a time, when a man deſires moſt to live: when God ſhall ſhorten a mans dayes in his journey (as *David* ſpeaketh) and take a man away in the midſt of his age, in the minority of his children, in the unſetledneſſe of his eſtate; this of all the reſt may ſeeme the heavieſt croſſe: yet learne of *Hezechiah* to be content to live as long as God will ſpare thee, and when God will have thee, be content to dye, When a loving mother ſendeth forth her childe to nurſe, and the nurſe hath kept it long enough; if the mother thinke good to take home her owne child againe, hath the nurſe any cauſe to grudge or complaine: how much leſſe cauſe have we to ſhew any token of ungodlineſſe and diſcontent, that God ſhould take home our departing ſoules, the worke of his owne hands, the plant of his owne grafting, who tenders it more than a mother doth her child, and will keepe it better and ſafer for us, than we can keepe it for our ſelves? Tis ſayd of *David*, *Act.* 13.35. *When he had ſerved his time, by the will of God, then he fell aſleepe and was gathered to his fathers.* Every man hath his time ſet him, to ſerve God in this World, ſome a longer, ſome a ſhorter time, as it pleaſeth God to predetermine and ſet it downe: now when a man hath ſerved his time (as *David* did) and done that he came for into the world, I meane when he hath repented of his ſinnes, reformed his wayes, provided for his familie, and made heaven and Salvation ſure to his owne ſoule; if then it ſhall pleaſe God to ſend forth that ſame *Angelum mortis* (as the Hebrews ſpeake) the Angell of death, to call him home, and fetch him into his fathers kingdome: what juſt cauſe hath

ſuch

ſuch a one to take *Iobs* wives counſell, in the beſt ſence; and even to *Bleſſe God and dye?* Tis a lamentable caſe when a man muſt dye whether he will or no, when God comes to pull away a mans ſoule, (as *Iob* ſpeakes, *Iob* 27. 10. *What hope hath the hypocrite, when God comes to pull away his ſoule.*) Iuſt as you ſee when a great fiſh is taken with an Angle, the man pulls, and the fiſh pulls, & the man puls againe, and by force of Armes twitcheth it out of the water: thus it fares with an hypocrite (ſaith *Iob*) when he is taken (as it were) with the Angle of God. I meane with ſome mortall ſickneſſe, that God begins to pull at his ſoule, and twitch it out of his body whether he will or no; then *quænam ſpes?* where's the hope of the Hypocrite? alas his hope is gone. The like expreſſion you have *Luke* 12. 20. God Almighty ſaith to the rich man, *Thou foole, this night they ſhall fetch away thy ſoule*; as if he had ſayd, I know thou art loath to part with thy ſoule, loath to forgoe it, but that ſhall not ſerve thy turne; there will come thoſe that will take it by force, and fetch it from thee whether thou wilt or no, ἁρπαῦσιν ἀπο σοῦ, they ſhall never aske thee leave, but ſhall wreſt and wring it from thee, into ſuch a place, ſuch a company, ſuch a condition, as I am afraid to mention. I have not now time (as the Greekes ſay) τώπην τὴν δρῦν βαλανίζειν, to beate this Oake for any more Acornes, nor to ſift my text for any more obſervations: onely in a word, If you deſire to dye contentedly, let your care and endevour be to live conſcionably; then let death come when it will, it ſhall be no otherwiſe than a midwife (as *Naz.* ſpeakes) to deliver you and helpe you out of the paynes of earth into the joys of heaven: then when you dye you ſhal live, when you go from men you ſhal go to God, when your eyes are cloſed on earth, they ſhall be opened againe in heaven.

Thus according to my weake ability I have done with my text, and ſhewed you the way *to be content. God of his mercy give a bleſſing unto it, for Ieſus Chriſt his ſake, to whom with the Father and the holy Spirit, be given and aſcribed all honour and glory; be done and performed all ſervice and duty, this day and for ever,* Amen.

FINIS.